I: Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

respective villages; sometimes, however, there are disputes regarding those lands between the different villages. Such disputes are settled by the Lyngam Sirdars of villages or by the Sirdars sitting with the two Lyngskors of the Siemship. If the disputes cannot be settled by these officials to the satisfaction of the parties, the latter are taken by the Lyngskors and Sirdars to the Siem of Nongstoin, who tries the case with the aid of the State mantris.

LAWS REGARDING OTHER PROPERTY.

There is no separate law applying to personal property, as opposed to real property, amongst the Khasis.

DECISION OF DISPUTES.

Khasi Courts of Judicature.

In the first place a complaint is made before the Siem, or chief, against a certain party or parties. The facts and circumstances of the case are then detailed before the chief and his headmen, the ostensible object being to attempt to bring about a compromise between the parties. If no reconciliation can be effected, a crier (*u sang pyrta shnong*), or in the Jaintia Hills a *sengot*, is sent out to proclaim at the top of his voice the durbar which is to assemble the following evening. He proceeds to cry the durbar in the evening when all the inhabitants have returned to the village from their usual daily pursuits. With a loud premonitory yell the crier makes use of the following formula *:—

"*Kaw!* thou, a fellow-villager; thou, a fellow-creature; thou, an old man; thou, who art grown up; thou, who art young, thou, a boy; thou, a child; thou, an infant; thou, who art little; thou, who art great. *Hoi!* because there is a contest. *Hoi!* for to cause to sit together. *Hoi!* for to cause to deliberate. *Hoi!* for to give intelligence together. *Hoi!* about to assemble in durbar. *Hoi!* for to listen attentively. *Hoi!* ye are forbidden. *Hoi!* ye are stopped to draw water thou

* What follows is a literal translation of the Khasi.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

602
621

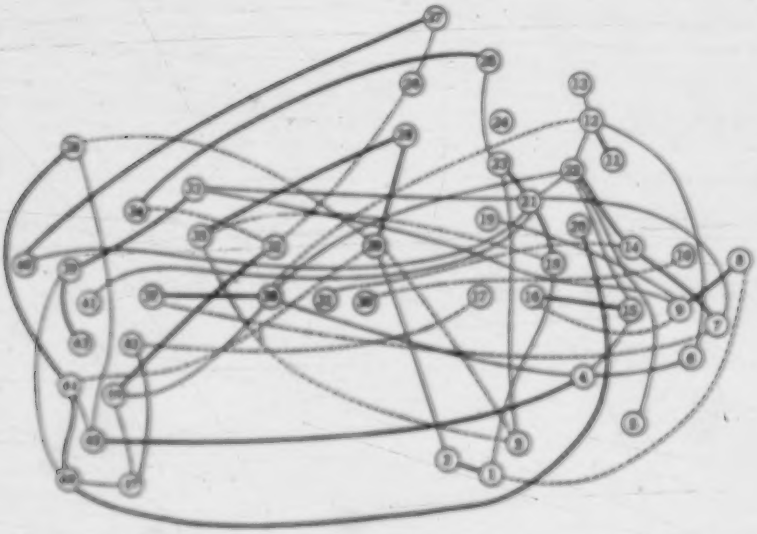

FIG. 10. — *Kinship and Household Location in Sohkynduh.*
——— Matrilineal kinships relations among household-owners;
——— Affinal relations (direct) among household-members;
· · · · · Affinal relations (indirect) among household-members.

particular two families are not restricted to one, but may be accumulated two or three, though I omitted to indicate these in Fig. 10.

582
591
61
621
628

There are some extensions of marriage relations with members outside the village. In Sohkynduh, out of 88 (48 houseowners and 40 their husbands) 13 men and 1 women came from neighbouring villages. Owing to the predominant uxorilocal arrangement, those who came in from outside the village were mostly men. By these members, five different *kur*, new to Sohkynduh, were found, as shown in List 7 (17-21). Most of these outsiders came from villages inside the Kadashinong, or villages no further than a day's journey there and back. This area might be called a secondary endogamous area, and includes more than half a dozen villages. In Kongton, 20 husbands and 3 women came from neighbouring villages by their marriages. The secondary endogamous areas of Kongton and of Sohkynduh are not the same but they overlap in certain places, the surrounding areas being centred on each village. There were, by December 1955, no instances of direct marriage between these two villages.

184
582
621
[795]

There are a few exceptions to local endogamy, such as those individuals who have become Christians and are educated in towns like Shillong or Cherrapunjee. They usually move to a town, seeking

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

workers and they were few in number.[1] They were particularly employed for such work as the clearing of jungle for new pan gardens in summer.

In the orange season (December to February) the number of workers increased and they were paid more: Rs. 1/8 were paid[2] for one load (one person carring 80 pounds of oranges, from an orange garden to the railway station—about two miles). Usually a worker made three to five trips a day. Many workers from Jaintia used to come for this particular season.

Semi-permanent workers were engaged for wet rice fields. They were usually Hindu cultivators: since these Khasi and other tribes do not know the technique of wet cultivation, plains people like the Biharee immigrants were engaged. These workers were provided with servants' quarters where they lived with their wives and children. However, very few Jaintia households possessed rice fields.

The economic prosperity of Jaintia reached its climax during the period from 1934 to 1940. Since 1942, the orange production has been decreasing. In 1945, a serious disease attacked the orange gardens as well as the pan-leaf gardens. Besides, by depriving Jaintia, as it had Sheila, of their most important markets, Dacca and Sylhet, the Partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 caused a serious economic depression in the whole region. On the other hand, because of the past prosperity, the population has rapidly increased during the last ten years. The serious economic condition of Jaintia is illustrated in the petition which was submitted by the Jaintia people when the Governor of Assam visited those areas in January 1956. It runs thus:

> "Since the last ten years or so, with the increase of population in the village and with the loss of fertility of the soil, the people were faced with economic depression. At present they are facing acute shortage of land they have also no scope to adopt other forms of cultivation like jhuming and wet rice cultivation, etc. Moreover, there has been successive attack of Bright's disease which destroyed and wiped out all the orange and pan gardens. And as such, majority of the families have to depend for their livelihood on daily wages. . . ."

It is indeed a serious situation for them, because the Khasi do not produce staple foods, such as rice, their economy is completely dependent on the trade of their products by which they purchase their main provisions, clothes, etc. Other peoples round Jaintia, being jhum cultivators, can at least get rice and cotton, the minimum requirements, staple foods and clothing are available even in the worst conditions, so that they can at least maintain themselves though the standard of living is low. As I stated before, a few households in Jaintia possessed rice fields, but the majority had none. Recently they rented some plots of jhum field for rice cultivation from Zemi-Naga of neighbouring villages.[3] However, its yield was but a small percentage of their consumption. A few

1. If they had worked in the gardens of Jaintia, they might have got more profit than from their own jhum fields. For one day's labour, they got Ans. 6/. For one month, they could earn Rs. 13 with which they could buy about 4-5 maunds of rice (one maunds paddy cost Rs. 3-4). For one year it became 50 maunds, which was impossible to produce in a jhum field by a single person's labour.

2. These rates, including the figures of note 1, apply to 1956.

3. Jaintia villagers told me that Zemi-Naga were kind enough to lend them their field for a negligible rent, though they had not enough for themselves. Zemi-Naga said that they owed much to Jaintia in the past, so that now they sympathized with the condition of Jaintia, and offered some parts of their jhum field.

16: McCormack E-4,5 (1956-1958) 1964
[P. 107 B] AR7 Khasi AR7

pendable water supply. Villages are about two to five miles apart, and have no boundary markers. In the past, villages contained semipublic buildings and grounds: the home of the village priest (also the home of a chief if he resided in that village), the village marketplace, and tree groves, cremation grounds, or other awesome spots that were believed to be inhabited by supernatural beings. Villages today may have also one or more Christian churches, government social welfare buildings, and schools. Formerly, villages were entered through a guarded gateway; this is no longer the case, and paths feed into villages from all directions. Often several villages are nucleated into one large unit; named and also described as a "village." These were once defense units, but were so uncohesive otherwise that institutionalized rivalry obtained among the component villages. Now, they have been integrated through the agency of all-village public services, especially schools. **Housing.** The traditional Khasi house is entered through a door at the rounded end of a U-shaped ground plan, and is about 20 feet at widest extent; it is about 30 feet deep, and is elliptical or hogback in profile. Its walls are of stone blocks cemented with mud. The roof of grass thatch, supported by a bamboo frame, overhangs the walls on their outside, down to about three feet above the ground. The house is divided into two parts: the front one-third is on the ground level, floored either with stone blocks or tamped earth, and is used for storage of occupational instruments and as a shelter for poultry. The rear two-thirds is raised four feet on piles of stone blocks to a platform of planks, and is partitioned into six rooms, comprising a kitchen, areas for storage of food and water, and sleeping quarters. Furniture is minimal, and the house is totally undecorated. There are no windows, and no smoke vents. A house generally has a companion shed, walled of wood and grass matting and thatched with grass. This serves as a pigsty, but it may be partitioned also to house cows, and it may have a loft for fuel storage. Compounds often contain garden plots, and are fenced around with stone or bamboo and mud. Nowadays, the traditional house has given way to Western-style bungalows of wood and tin, especially in and around Shillong. [Cf. Mukherjee et al. 1941.]

ECONOMY. The Khasi economy is a market economy based on agriculture, and most Khasis are primary producers, sellers, middlemen, and/or providers of services in connection with markets. Khasis are often multioccupational; they produce goods for partial subsistence, and also play some part in trade. **Agriculture.** On the Shillong plateau, the major field crops are potatoes, maize, millets, and dry rice, still produced mostly through swidden farming, with a two- to three-year period of fallow, but increasingly through continuous use of a single field with the aid of ma-

18: Godwin-Austen G-3 (ca. 1872) 1875 AR7
Khasi AR7

rude stone monuments. At the village of Nougshai, near Shillong, are to be seen some very striking monoliths; and although they do not come up quite to the length of those at Nurtiang (noticed by Dr. Hooker in his "Himalayan Journals"), yet they are very worthy of being mentioned. They stand on the open spur just above the village, and have been worked out of the beds of the Shillong sandstone series, and some of the smaller blocks have been taken from the conglomerate beds, the lowest in the series, and which come in, in the bed of the ravine, to the north of the spur. There are a number of monuments on this site, large and small, arranged both in line and on two sides of a square; the two largest have their central monoliths—height, 24 ft. 3 in.; width, 5 ft. 6 in.; thickness, 8 in.; and height, 23 ft. 2 in.; width, 2 ft. 9 in.; thickness, 1 ft., respectively.

Plate ii., which is taken from a photograph by Mr. William Robert, Assistant Surveyor in the Khasi Hills survey party, gives an excellent idea of the second largest structure, showing the very massive flat-stone, the "Mao Kynthai," in front. This structure consisted of thirteen upright stones, which could not all be brought into the field of the camera; but the six outside stones on the right are shown. Many of the slabs in the adjacent monuments have been overthrown and broken quite recently, perhaps by Sepoys and camp followers from the military station close by. At one time a mountain battery of Eurasian Artillery was quartered there, and I attribute the overthrow of so many of the stones in the neighbourhood to their handiwork, who would look on such amusement as a "great lark." The Sepoy (native of India) is not of a mischievous disposition; the European and half-European (uneducated) is markedly so. Thus the monument with the highest stone is imperfect, and it must, when perfect, have been a very handsome one. This is a sad pity, after the time and labour that must have been expended in its erection.

I did not observe any new slabs anywhere in the immediate neighbourhood. Nougshai must formerly have been a large and powerful village; it stands on a naturally very strong position, and old lines of fortification are to be traced on many sides, especially on the approach from the direction of the Falls of the Umiam. These old lines of defence are on a curious system: a ditch and bank have been carried forward from the main defences from 200 to 300 yards down the ridge of the spurs, thus effectually preventing an enemy working round the hill sides below the villages.

This fortified site points to a state of things in these hills when the relations between the large village communities or

18: Godwin-Austen G-3 (ca. 1872) 1875 AR7
Khasi AR7

clans were very much as we find them at the present day among the Nagas and Kukis, beyond and bordering our present extreme limits, viz. that of constant feud. They are now the quietest, most peaceful, and contented of all the hill people on the eastern frontier.

In my former paper I did not allude to the cairns in these hills, which I am inclined to think are works of greater age than the stone structures. The custom is one that certainly has long since been given up, for I could not obtain any satisfactory account of them. They are only to be seen on the northern side of the Khasi plateau, and Dr. Hooker, in his account of his trips to the Kollong Rock, did not fail to notice them. About Mairaug and towards Nougstoiu they are very numerous, and always stand on commanding situations. On the path leading down the grassy spur to the stone monuments previously described, near Nougshai, is a very fine large example of a cairn, about eight feet high. They are usually plain hemispherical mounds of earth; but this one is faced all round at the base with slabs of stone about four feet high; they are frequently not higher than six feet. A distant view is shown in Plate iii.

Nowhere is there any trace of the earth that forms them having been excavated close by; it must, therefore, have been carried in some short distance, to avoid unsightly hollows near the structure. I should much like to have dug into one of these cairns, but was afraid to hurt the feelings of the people by doing so. They are very probably cineraries of an earlier form to those now made of stone, and this point it might be interesting to clear up.

Beyond the Khasi area no cairns are to be found, at least I had never come across any until visiting North Munipur last winter (1872—73), where, at the head of the Imphal river, on the direct road from Samaguting, are four fine cairns, all faced with large boulders. They are old, and the Nagas now living in the village near said they had been made by another clan of Nagas, who long ago had gone further north, and the site of whose village had been lately re-occupied by Kukis.

Mr. C. B. Clarke, in a paper read lately before your Institute, refers to the different forms of the cinerary in the Khasi Hills; but he has not quite exhausted the subject, or got further than I did, although with regard to the disposal of the ashes of the dead he gives some further interesting particulars.

As I think that drawings are of very great interest, and better exhibit the many different forms of bone depository or cinerary that have been adopted at different periods by tribes inhabiting localities very far apart, and often quite unconnected affinitively,